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ABSTRACT

A common method used by states, school districts, teachers, parents, and students to assess learning is through use of a scoring guide or rubric. Instructors in a teacher education setting describe their use of rubrics with preservice teachers in the expectation that these teacher candidates would eventually be using rubrics themselves and could benefit from their use as students. Instructors in the School of Education developed a scoring guide for sections of the same course, and others developed scoring guides for a class project, a review of articles on a subject, and a student-prepared lesson plan. The overall feeling of both faculty members and students is that scoring guides are a useful assessment tool that is helpful in teaching students about authentic assessment. Students become more comfortable with scoring guides and teachers find that using rubrics improves teaching. Appendixes contain the scoring outline for a class project, the guide for scoring article reviews, and a lesson plan scoring guide. (Contains 11 references.) (SLD)

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Practicing What We Teach: Assessing Pre-service Teachers' Performance Using Scoring Guides

by

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Practicing What We Teach: Assessing Pre-service Teachers' Performance Using Scoring Guides

States across the country have been and are currently redesigning their curricula to assure the public that students will be able to meet the demands of the 21st Century (Ravitch, 1995; Gandel, 1996; Marzano & Kendall, 1996). Many national content area organizations have published national standards with grade level benchmarks identifying what students should know and what students should be able to do in each academic area (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989; National Council for the Social Studies, 1994; National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, 1995; Marzano & Kendall, 1996; National Research Council, 1996). The emphasis for most of the standards is on higher level learning activities (according to Bloom's Taxonomy of learning objectives) that will encourage students to become self-directed, life long learners who are critical problem-solvers in the context of a cooperative environment. Because of this shift in emphasis, students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge through a performance of an authentic task rather than by rote regurgitation of factual material. Consequently, we expect teachers to use measures of authentic assessment to assess student learning.

One of the most common methods for states, school districts, teachers, parents, and students to assess learning is through the use of a scoring guide or rubric. "A rubric is a set of scoring guidelines for evaluating student work"

(Wiggins, 1998, p.154). Rubrics answer a lot of assessment questions; for example: What performance criteria will I use to judge student work? Do I have examples of student work that demonstrate the range of a quality performance? How can students determine the differences between an individual performance in relation to other students? How can I grade all the performances in a valid, reliable, and fair manner (Wiggins, 1998)?

Generally, rubrics are a scaled guide that list developmentally appropriate benchmarks students are expected to reach in a particular subject or discipline. A rubric depends on a standard to describe how or at what level criteria must be met. A well crafted and written scoring guide can empower both the student and the teacher because performance expectations about what constitutes a range of quality work is clearly delineated (Wiggins, 1998). In short, rubrics or scoring guides remove much of the guesswork in completing a learning activity (from the student's viewpoint) and remove much of the guesswork in grading a student's product (from the teacher's viewpoint).

Because so many states and school districts are using rubrics and scoring guides in assessing student work (Gandel, 1996; Marzano & Kendall, 1996), teacher education programs are beginning to provide pre-service and inservice teachers with opportunities to develop and use scoring guides. In our state of Oregon for example, the Oregon State Department of Education has developed a set of scoring guides for assessing student's writing ability, knowledge of mathematics, speaking skills, etc. (Proficiency-based Admissions

Standards System, 1998). We have used these guides in our methods courses, explained their development and use, and allowed students to practice using the guides by having them score actual student work in relation to the state benchmarks. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has published a set of scoring guides for making judgments about teacher performance (Danielson, 1996). We have also introduced our students to these guides.

In many of our classes, however, the university instructors were not using scoring guides to assess the authentic learning activities that they were requiring the pre-service teachers to complete. Many instructors used their own idiosyncratic, pre-conceived, and un-codified notions about the appearance of a quality student product to grade student performances without giving students a really clear understanding of the these performance criteria. Although instructors taught pre-service and inservice teachers the value of using scoring guides as a form of authentic assessment, few instructors had changed their own manner of assessing student products. Most of us realized it was time that we practiced what we had been preaching. If we were extolling the virtues of scoring guides, we, too, should employ them when they are appropriate. In this manner, not only would our students and ourselves reap the inherent benefits of using such rubrics, but our students would gain first hand knowledge of being assessed with this method. They could see for themselves how scoring guides worked in terms of laying out expectations, being assessed based on these

predetermined and pre-explained standards, and the pros and cons of using such a measure.

Serendipitously, we realized that the two of us were beginning to use rubrics in our classes. We exchanged our ideas and experiences, then invited interested colleagues to meet to share thoughts about and experiences with the use of scoring guides in education classes. As a result, many of the School of Education faculty began developing and using scoring guides for assessing student work in a good number of the School's classes. Instructors who teach sections of the same course met to design a common scoring guide. In addition, instructors with similar assignments share the same scoring guide. For example, many of us require students to review articles; so we now share a common means of assessing these reviews. This not only provides continuity for the students but helps to ensure consistent expectations across the faculty and courses.

In the appendix, we have included some examples of the types of scoring guides we use with our classes. The "final project" was designed by one instructor and is used for scoring in one specific class (Health, Safety and Nutrition). The "article review" is an example of a guide designed by a number of faculty and used by many of us in a number of different classes. The "lesson plan" was originally designed by one faculty member, underwent review by a collective, and is now used by several methods instructors. We have also attached a copy of the scoring guide used in assessing our master's students'

action research projects. This rubric was also collectively designed and used by most faculty working with this course. By providing a range of examples and designs, we hope to provide a better understanding of what it is we are doing with the guides in our classes.

In addition to using teacher-made scoring guides, many of us also give the students an opportunity to design a class rubric for a specific assignment. The entire class collectively writes the criteria and designs the rubric. This gives them experience with designing a scoring guide so during their teaching experiences they can either write their own or engage their classes in the designing of guides. We also encourage our students to score each other's work using the rubrics before submitting the final product to the instructors.

We solicited students in our classes for their comments about our use of scoring guides. Most students were very positive about this type of assessment. Some liked the clarity which it brought to the assignment:

I found the scoring guides to be very useful. It helped me to know exactly what you were going to be looking for which made me feel more confident about my final products. Then if I got scored down on something, I knew exactly why and my papers didn't just say 45/50 for no reason.

The lesson plan scoring guide also helped me to focus my plans towards the expectations.

I find scoring guides to be most useful when presented before actually needed. In this manner, expectations become explicit and a direct relationship exists between objectives and assessment. Guides also allow personal strengths and weaknesses to shine through. When implemented consistently, they help students recognize their own growth and progress.

Students also appreciated being involved in the design of some of the scoring rubrics:

I really liked the fact that you included us in making these guides. It shows you value our opinion and gives us a feeling of choice on what we were to accomplish. Thanks for including us!

The grading scales created by the class were especially helpful. Students could offer insight as well as criticism as to the creation of guidelines and expectations. These helped clarify our projects and gave necessary structure.

I especially liked the (student-made) ones because we put things that we thought were relevant to what our assignment was. It helped us to know what our class as a whole felt was important and not important for putting on our scoring guide.

Students also felt these experiences with scoring guides were beneficial to them professionally. Some specifically stated how they had used rubrics with their field experience students or that they planned to do so:

I used one in one of my work sample lessons. The kids responded well to the guide, for they knew exactly what they had to do to get a high grade. Those who didn't fulfill all the criteria knew the reasons behind their lower grades. I don't think I'll use them all the time, but scoring guides work well for projects with many parts--it helps the kids stay organized.

I have used this practice (having students help create the scoring guide) a great deal in my classroom, and the students turn in a higher level of work than when I create a scoring guide for them.

I have begun using scoring guides for both my work samples and my classroom. I find them effective and a way to simplify my grading and my after school time in the classroom.

There were relatively few students who did not share the enthusiasm and positive attitudes of the rest of their classmates. They did not feel the same need for structure as some of their colleagues:

(Scoring guides) were not helpful to me because the categories consisted of things that all people at this level of education should automatically do. Rather than paying attention to them, I simply just did my best under the circumstances, which automatically included what was listed in the scoring guides.

I did not find the scoring guides useful except that they provided information on what you were looking for in any given assignment. My preference would have been a short paragraph stating the essential elements of the assignment.

The overall feeling of both the faculty and the students is that scoring guides are, indeed, a useful assessment tool. We believe they have assisted our students in beginning to grasp the multiplicity of issues that true authentic assessment involves. Students also have become more comfortable with the state and district scoring guides they must use during their pre-service and inservice teaching. In our experience, students appreciate knowing and helping to decide what the expectations for major activities of the course will be and thus they feel as if they are truly a part of a learning community.

As a faculty, we have found using rubrics has improved our teaching. It forces us to really align our objectives and assessments. And it makes us examine why we are including a particular assignment and examine just what our expectations of the students are. The guides also serve to focus discussion with the students on the content of their products and make reviewing the activities and assigning a grade much easier. As a School, having faculty use common scoring guides has also helped to keep multi-section courses similar and aligned expectations of common assignments (e.g., lesson plans). Our experience confirms Guskey's (1996) supposition that when teachers use explicit criteria for grading student work, both teachers and students find the process to be fair and open. The use of scoring guides has been a positive

experience for us. It has been a win-win situation for both instructors and students.

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APPENDICES

Final Project

Your final project is to design or revise a health, safety or nutrition related game or activity that would be appropriate for use in an elementary or middle school classroom.

Requirements:
Your plan must:
1. provide background information (grade level, where/how the lesson fits into the curriculum, time frame, and necessary resources and sources of ideas if applicable)
2. list specific student outcomes/objectives
3. correctly covers an appropriate topic/area
4. be clearly explained so anyone would be able to play your game or conduct your activity

Scoring Guide:

	5	3	1
Background	Grade level is appropriate Clear rationale/flow Appropriate time frame Resources/Sources (if any) are noted	Includes most of the requirements for an A	Includes few of the requirements for an A
Student Obj	Clearly stated	Stated, but not very specific	Unclear
Clarity	Plan is complete Could be implemented fairly easily Reads well	Main ideas come through, but some details are lacking Reads ok	Leaves much to the imagination Difficult to follow
Content	Content is presented accurately Topic is appropriate	Minor content errors Topic is marginally acceptable	Major content errors Topic is not sufficiently related to course content

Article Review Instructions

(1) Find an article in a journal, in ERIC, or on the web that addresses the topic at the appropriate grade level.
(2) After reading the article, write a review to include
    (a) complete APA bibliographic citation of the article
    (b) a **concise** summary of the article
    (c) your reaction, supported by evidence; i.e. don't just give an opinion--give an informed opinion.

It is expected that the reviews will be about one-page in length.

Scoring Guide:

	5	3	1
Citation	Correctly follows APA format	Few, minor errors	Major/many errors
Summary	Concise but complete Identifies major issues Easy for reader to get the essence of the article	Complete but not concise Identifies major issues Reader gets the essence of the article	Incomplete description Major issues not identified Reader does not get the essence of the article
Reaction	Opinion is obvious Evidence of application of theories/readings/class discussions used to support your reaction	Opinion could be stated more clearly Artificial evidence of application of theories/readings/class discussions used to support your reaction	Opinion unclear Little evidence of application of theories/readings/ class discussions used to support your reaction
Level of writing	Appropriate to the level of the class	Adequate - could benefit from rewriting	Needs major editing

Lesson Plan Scoring Guide

For a "5" in each category, the specifics are listed. A "3" would mean some of the requirements for a 5 are lacking. A "1" would indicate most of the requirements are lacking.

Appearance (X1)	follows required UP format typed heading complete
Goal & Rationale (X1)	correctly stated cites source of rationale developmentally appropriate
Objectives (X2)	correctly categorized cognitive levels indicated aligned with goal and rationale includes performance
Resources & Materials (X1)	citations follow APA format accurate, complete resource and materials list
Preassessment/ Motivational Activity (X1)	evidence of preassessment and motivational set appropriate time allotment
Instruction (X3)	accurate content developmentally appropriate meets objectives addresses individual student differences appropriate methodology for the lesson appropriate time allotments flows smoothly provides appropriate detail (see handbook)
Ongoing Assessment (X1)	planned checks for student understanding
Closure/Evaluation (X2)	review of main ideas measures student learning matches objectives appropriate time allotment
Follow-up Activities (X1)	planned student activities (e.g. homework, enrichment activities, early finishers)

Reviewer _____

Proposal by:_____

The final project will be assessed using the following scoring rubric. Each item will be rated on a 1-5 scale (1 = Not addressed, 2 = Marginally addressed, 3 = Addressed but unclear, 4 = Addressed sufficiently, 5 = Well addressed)

Chapter One - Introduction					
1. the problem is precisely and clearly stated	1	2	3	4	5
2. there is hard evidence a problem exists	1	2	3	4	5
3. there is documentation that this problem is important	1	2	3	4	5
4. the project setting is clearly described	1	2	3	4	5
5. your role and responsibilities are clearly described	1	2	3	4	5
6. issues/terms are defined operationally	1	2	3	4	5
7. the population affected within the specific setting is clearly identified	1	2	3	4	5
Chapter Two - Literature Review					
1. the list of related references are from current and appropriate journals	1	2	3	4	5
2. APA format is correctly used	1	2	3	4	5
3. the list of references adequately relate to the problem	1	2	3	4	5
4. there are a minimum of 15 solid references	1	2	3	4	5
Chapter Three - Design/Methods					
1. sample is appropriate for the problem	1	2	3	4	5
2. the method(s) for conducting the qualitative research seems viable	1	2	3	4	5
3. the method(s) is clearly explained	1	2	3	4	5
4. procedure(s) for data analysis is clearly explained	1	2	3	4	5
5. procedure(s) for data anlysis seems viable	1	2	3	4	5
6. instrument for data collection, if any	1	2	3	4	5